



COLLABORATIONS



May/June 1999

The Newsletter for California's Community-Focused Court Planning and Court Community Outreach Initiatives

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"A new era of collaboration between county courts, the Judicial Council, and California's communities will lead to a renewal of public trust and confidence in the administration of justice and the primacy of the rule of law in California."

—Chief Justice Ronald M. George

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County Spotlight Riverside, Ventura, and Humboldt Counties Lay the Foundation for Local Court Planning

Research and Planning: Cornerstones for Riverside County Planning Team

The local planning team of the Superior Court of Riverside County, led by **Presiding Judge Robert G. Taylor**, began its community-focused court planning effort by asking members to envision the court twenty years hence and to consider the results they would like to see the planning team accomplish. These responses were used to establish the planning committee's direction and led to vision and mission statements. Next, the committee approached members of the public and community organizations with the following question: "As a user of the Riverside County court system, what is the one thing you would change to make the court process easier for you?" Responses were gathered, analyzed, and used to target community concerns and to plan appropriate public forums.

The planning team also sought the counsel of nationally recognized court community outreach advocate **Presiding Judge Veronica S. McBeth** of the Los Angeles Municipal Court. This collaboration led in

turn to planning for public forums and focus groups with local business organizations and with superintendents of several unified school districts. These efforts have already led to suggestions regarding jury service improvements, which the planning team will consider in drafting its integrated court plan.

Arthur Sims, Executive Officer, reports that team initiatives will soon benefit from the expertise of **Dr. Daniel Straub**, community-focused court planning consultant. Dr. Straub's services, secured through the Judicial Council's

**Superior Court of Riverside
County Web Site:**
www.co.riverside.ca.us/depts/courts

Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee grant, will be directed at assisting the planning team to create a planning schedule for external and internal analysis, involve stakeholders, develop a "balanced scorecard" for monitoring court planning progress, and coordinate and plan for community-focused public forums.

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AOC Civic Center Offices

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**Visit the California Court
and Community Collaboration
Web Site:**
[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/
community](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/community)

County Strategic Planning Dates to Remember:

**June 15, 1999: Draft Plan or
Status Report Due at AOC**

**December 15, 1999: Final
Draft Plan Due at AOC**

Ventura Begins by Building Community Collaborations

Following a blueprint similar to Riverside County's, the Ventura County community-focused court planning team began by discussing the team's role in meeting community needs. As meetings progressed, the committee augmented its membership to reflect stakeholder interests, adding representatives from education, business, the elderly, and minority communities. Under the leadership of **Sheila Gonzalez**, Executive Officer, and **Presiding Judge Charles W. Campbell, Jr.**, the team surveyed these same groups to determine their impression of court systems and operations.

Team members will shortly begin to build upon this foundation as they work with court planning consultant, **Dr. Dale Lefever**, whose services were obtained under terms of the Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee grant. With Dr. Lefever's assistance, the team will concentrate on systemic court community collaborations that help the court to shape its operations to current and projected community needs. Initial focus will be on community trends, stakeholder expectations (as determined by current and future surveys), and the development of appropriate action plans, with goals, strategies, and implementation steps. After completing work on these initial steps, the team will focus on the implementation process and on integrating planning activities — such as those associated with technology, security, and human resource

**Superior Court of Ventura County
Web Site:**
www.ventura.org/courts/vencrts.htm

management — into its overall plan.



Humboldt Courts Survey Community to Plan for the Future

In the northern part of the state, the strategic planning process gains momentum in Humboldt County, where community collaborations are already well under construction. The planning team, led by **Presiding Judge W. Bruce Watson, Jr.** and **Executive Officer Dwight W. Clark**, began by taking a good look at the community in order to identify stakeholder groups. These groups led to the identification of important focus groups, which the team has already begun to survey. A jury service poll is currently

**Superior Court of Humboldt
County Web Site:**
www.humboldtcourt.ca.gov

being analyzed and will be used in refining the team's vision and mission statements.

Like many of its neighbors, Humboldt courts have also taken advantage of the Judicial Council's Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee grant to secure the services of a planning consultant. Working with **Dr. Daniel Straub**, the team plans to develop a court standards telephone survey and to hold additional focus groups. The team is confident that these strategies will prove powerful planning tools in its ongoing effort to shape court programs and operations to the community's needs.

Planning Consultant Grants Awarded; June 30 Contract Deadline

Forty-one California counties have received full-request awards under a Judicial Council Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee grant for court planning consultants. As announced in the previous issue of *Collaborations*, these grants are drawn from the Trial Court Improvement Fund and will be used by county planning teams for contracting with strategic planning consultants.

The grants underscore the council's continuing commitment to the statewide community-focused court planning initiative and are intended to assist counties in making the transition from discrete operational and programmatic planning to an integrated systemic strategic process.

Counties receiving grant funds are reminded that consultant contracts must be fully executed no later than June 30, 1999; a copy of the signed contract should be mailed to the attention of Shelley M. Stump at the AOC.



Court/Community Outreach Task Force Handbook Distributed

The court community outreach handbook, *Dialogue: Courts Reaching Out to Their Communities* has been released. A resource created to assist courts in developing and enhancing court and community collaboration efforts, *Dialogue* is being distributed to all California trial court presiding judges,

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(*Handbook, continued*)

appellate court justices, clerks of court, and court executive officers and to interested officials across the state and nation. This important publication contains an extensive ethics analysis; a discussion of community justice initiatives; and practical tools, samples, and resources to help courts take action in public outreach efforts.

Dialogue, produced in part under a grant from the Foundation of the California State Bar, is available in limited supply in print; however, interested parties can download the publication from the California Court and Community Collaborations Web Site:

<http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/community/>

County Planning Team Workshops Take Place

In June, the momentum of the California community-focused court planning initiative continued with two county planning team workshops sponsored by the Judicial Council Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee, **Presiding Judge Veronica S. McBeth** and **Judge Judith McConnell**, co-chairs.

A workshop for small counties was held on June 3–4 at the Berkeley Marina Radisson Hotel. Medium-size and large counties convened on June 17–18 at the Westin Horton Plaza Hotel in San Diego.

Nationally recognized planning expert, **Dr. Dale Lefever**, moderating a distinguished guest faculty assembled from California's court community, facilitated both workshops. Panelists included

Justice Richard D. Huffman, Fourth District of the Court of Appeal and Chair of the Judicial Council Executive and Planning Committee; **Assistant Presiding Judge Ray L. Hart**, Los Angeles Municipal Court and Chair of the Trial Court Budget Commission; **Presiding Judge Kathleen E. O'Leary**, Superior Court of Orange County, and member of the Trial Court Budget Commission; **Jose O. Guillen**, Executive Officer, Superior Court of Napa County; **Christine Patton**, Executive Officer, Superior Court of Santa Cruz County; **Michael Roddy**, Executive Officer, Superior Court of Sacramento County; **Frederick (Fritz) Ohlrich**, Court Administrator, Los Angeles Municipal Court; **Arthur Sims**, Executive Officer, Superior Court of Riverside County; and **Sheila Gonzalez**, Executive Officer, Superior Court of Ventura County.

In addition to a review of the 5-Step Strategic Planning Model introduced at the May 1998 Statewide Courts and Their Communities Conference, the workshops featured a "Best Practices" session addressing what individual county teams have learned about the planning process. During the "Unique Contributions" session, focus groups for judges, court administrators, and non-court planning team members had the opportunity to discuss their unique contributions to the planning effort. A highlight of both workshops was a panel discussion, "The Strategic Planning Umbrella," which focused on the integration of all aspects of court operations in the planning process.

Enthusiasm for the workshops ran high, with more

that 200 attendees registered.

Court Community Collaborations Clearinghouse Established

Responding to its Judicial Council charge, the Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee, co-chaired by **Judge Judith McConnell** and **Presiding Judge Veronica S. McBeth**, announces the establishment of a *Community Collaborations Clearinghouse*. The clearinghouse library and database, housed at the AOC in San Francisco, is a collection of resources on effective court community outreach programs, court planning efforts, and important state and national justice initiatives. The collection includes texts, pamphlets, brochures, videos, curriculum guides, and Web site information on a wide variety of topics. Over 300 individual items, each with synopses, have been cataloged in a topic-indexed database.

Additional information on the clearinghouse can be obtained by contacting Jack Urquhart, AOC (415.865.7654).

Downloadable Web Site Resources Available:

- ◆ **Final Report of the Special Task Force on Court/Community Outreach:**
www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/outreach/report.htm
- ◆ **Team Planning Resources:**
www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/community/planning/phase2_resources.htm

Strategic Plan Deadline Update

The Judicial Council's Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee previously requested that all county planning teams submit a draft strategic plan on **June 15, 1999**, with a final draft due on **December 15, 1999**. However, because of the delay in disbursing court consultant grant funds and the formidable requirements of transitional-year budget planning, some courts have expressed concern about meeting submission deadlines. Thus, county teams are asked to submit, by June 15, 1999, *either* a draft plan (partial or complete) *or* a progress report on planning team efforts, including an anticipated draft submission date.

Draft plan questions should be directed to Shelley M. Stump, AOC (415.865.7453).

Californians at National Conference on Public Trust and Confidence

Five hundred leaders from state and federal courts, the bar, the media, and citizen groups convened on May 14–15 in Washington, D.C., in the first-ever conference to address the serious issue of public trust in the justice system.

Representing California were **Chief Justice Ronald M. George**; **Mr. William C. Vickrey**, Administrative Director of the Courts; **Presiding Judge Veronica S. McBeth**, Los Angeles Municipal Court; **Judge Judith McConnell**, Superior Court of San Diego County, and other members of the state's court community. The two-day conference heralds a grassroots effort to bolster the public's confidence in the courts — an effort in which strategies such as California's court community outreach initiative

play an important role.

Keynote speakers included **Chief Justice of the United States William Rehnquist**, **U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor**, and former New York Governor **Mario Cuomo**.

Conference attendees reviewed the findings of two recent public opinion surveys detailing perceived strengths and weaknesses in the American judicial system: the American Bar Association's *Perceptions of the U.S. Justice System* (February 1999) and the National Center for State Courts' *How the Public Views the State Courts: A 1999 National Survey*. Findings of the latter survey are available at the National Center for State Courts Web site, www.ncsc.dni.us/ptc/ptc.htm.

Contributions for Collaborations?

Contact Jack Urquhart
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